Bram Stoker

82 languages

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Bram Stoker

Stoker in 1906

Born	Abraham Stoker 8 November 1847 Clontarf, Dublin, Ireland
Died	20 April 1912 (aged 64) Pimlico, London, England
Resting place	Golders Green Crematorium, London
Pen name	Bram Stoker
Occupation	Writer · barrister · theatre manager
Language	English
Education	Trinity College Dublin (B.A., 1870; M.A., 1875)

Period	Victorian era, Edwardian era
Genre	Gothic fiction, romantic fiction, horror fiction, vampire literature
Literary movement	Dark romanticism
Years active	1879–1911
Notable works	*Dracula* (1897) *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902) *Under the Sunset* (1881) *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) *The Fate of Fenella* (1892)
Spouse	Florence Balcombe (m. 1878)
Children	1
Parents	Charlotte Stoker (mother)
Relatives	Sir William Thornley Stoker (brother) Sir William Thomson (brother-in-law) Dacre Stoker (great grand-nephew)

Signature

Bram Stoker

Website

The Bram Stoker Estate

Abraham Stoker (8 November 1847 – 20 April 1912) was an Irish writer, barrister, and theatre manager.[1][2] He was the author of *Dracula* (1897) and the creator of the fictional character Count Dracula. The novel and its antagonist are milestones in the fields of Gothic and vampire literature.[3]

Stoker was the third of seven children and was bedridden for the first seven years of his life with an undiagnosed illness. He received his initial education at home, before enrolling at Trinity College Dublin in 1864. He excelled as a rugby athlete and was a prominent member of both the university's student union and the philosophical society. It was also during this period that Stoker was introduced to literature, becoming the auditor of the society and writing his first paper.

During the early part of his career, Stoker spent ten years in the civil service at Dublin Castle, during which time he was also a drama critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail*. Following this, he was employed as a theatre critic for several newspapers, including the *Daily Telegraph*, and occasionally wrote short stories and theatre commentaries. During his life, he was better known as the personal assistant of actor Sir Henry Irving and the business manager of the West End's Lyceum Theatre, which Irving owned. During his time as a theatre critic, Stoker founded the "Dublin Sketching Club" in 1879, which dealt mostly with art collections. He regularly travelled during his free time, particularly to Cruden Bay in Scotland, which was the setting for two of his novels and also served as the inspiration for writing *Dracula*. He was friends with both Arthur Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde, and had collaborated with other authors for experimental novels such as *The Fate of Fenella* (1892).[4]

Stoker wrote a dozen horror and mystery novels and novellas,[5] including *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) and *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902), but his reputation as one of the most influential writers of Gothic horror fiction rests solely with *Dracula*.[6] Since the early 20th century, the novel has become one of the best-selling works of vampire fiction and Count Dracula is among the best-known fictional figures of the Victorian era.[7][8][9][10] The work deeply influenced future representations of vampiric characters and Stoker came to be regarded by many as "the father of vampire fiction."[11][12]

Early life [edit]

Stoker was born on 8 November 1847 at 15 Marino Crescent, Clontarf, in Dublin, Ireland.[13] The park adjacent to the house is now known as Bram Stoker Park.[14] His parents were Abraham Stoker (1799–1876), an Anglo-Irishman from Dublin, and Charlotte Mathilda Blake Thornley (1818–1901), of English and Irish descent, who was raised in County Sligo.[15] Stoker was the third of seven children, the eldest of whom was Sir Thornley Stoker, 1st Baronet.[16] Abraham and Charlotte were members of the Church of Ireland Parish of Clontarf and attended the parish church with their children, who were baptised there.[17] Abraham was a senior civil servant.

Stoker was bedridden with an unknown illness until he started school at the age of seven when he made a complete recovery. Of this time, Stoker wrote, "I was naturally thoughtful, and the leisure of long illness gave opportunity for many thoughts which were fruitful according to their kind in later years." He was privately educated at Bective House school run by the Reverend William Woods.[18][19]

After his recovery, he grew up without further serious illnesses, even excelling as an athlete at Trinity College, Dublin, which he attended from 1864 to 1870. He graduated with a BA in 1870 and paid to receive his MA in 1875. Though he later in life recalled graduating "with honours in mathematics", this appears to have been a mistake.[20] He was named University Athlete, participating in multiple sports, including playing rugby for Dublin University. He was auditor of the College Historical Society (*the Hist*) and president of the University Philosophical Society (he remains the only student in Trinity's history to hold both positions), where his first paper was on *Sensationalism in Fiction and Society*.[21]

Early career [edit]

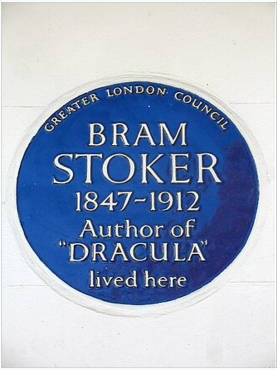
Bram Stoker's former home featuring a

commemorative plaque, Kildare Street, Dublin

Stoker became interested in the theatre while a student through his friend Dr. Maunsell. While working for the Irish Civil Service, he became the theatre critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail*,[22] which was co-owned by Sheridan Le Fanu, an author of Gothic tales. Theatre critics were held in low esteem at the time, but Stoker attracted notice by the quality of his reviews. In December 1876, he gave a favourable review of Henry Irving's *Hamlet* at the Theatre Royal in Dublin. Irving invited Stoker for dinner at the Shelbourne Hotel where he was staying, and they became friends. Stoker also wrote stories, and "Crystal Cup" was published by the London Society in 1872, followed by "The Chain of Destiny" in four parts in *The Shamrock*. In 1876, while a civil servant in Dublin, Stoker wrote the non-fiction book *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* (published 1879), which remained a standard work.[18] Furthermore, he possessed an interest in art and was a founder of the Dublin Sketching Club in 1879.

Lyceum Theatre [edit]

Stoker's residence at 18 St Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, London



Blue plaque at the address

In 1878, Stoker married Florence Balcombe, daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel James Balcombe of 1 Marino Crescent. She was a celebrated beauty whose former suitor had been Oscar Wilde.[23] Stoker had known Wilde from his student days, having proposed him for membership of the university's Philosophical Society while he was president. Wilde was upset at Florence's decision, but Stoker later resumed the acquaintanceship, and, after Wilde's fall, visited him on the Continent.[24]

The Stokers moved to London, where Stoker became acting manager and then business manager of Irving's Lyceum Theatre in the West End, a post he held for 27 years.[25] On 31 December 1879, Bram and Florence's only child was born, a son whom they christened Irving Noel Thornley Stoker. The collaboration with Henry Irving was important for Stoker and through him, he became involved in London's high society, where he met James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Working for Irving, the most famous actor of his time, and managing one of the most successful theatres in London made Stoker a notable if busy man. He was dedicated to Irving and his memoirs show he idolised him. In London, Stoker also met Hall Caine, who became one of his closest friends – he dedicated *Dracula* to him.[26]

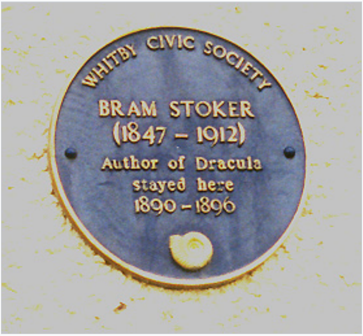
In the course of Irving's tours, Stoker travelled the world, although he never visited Eastern Europe, a setting for his most famous novel. Stoker enjoyed the United States, where Irving was popular. With Irving, he was invited twice to the White House and knew William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. Stoker set two of his novels in America and used Americans as characters, the most notable being Quincey Morris. He also met one of his literary idols, Walt Whitman, having written to him in 1872 an extraordinary letter[27] that some have interpreted as the expression of a deeply-suppressed homosexuality.[28][29]

Bram Stoker in Cruden Bay [edit]

Slains Castle, Cruden Bay. The early chapters of *Dracula* were written in Cruden Bay, and Slains Castle possibly provided visual inspiration for Bram Stoker during the writing phase.

Stoker was a regular visitor to Cruden Bay in Scotland between 1892 and 1910. His month-long holidays to the Aberdeenshire coastal village provided a large portion of available time for writing his books. Two novels were set in Cruden Bay: *The Watter's Mou'* (1895) and *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902). He started writing *Dracula* there in 1895 while in residence at the Kilmarnock Arms Hotel. The guest book with his signatures from 1894 and 1895 still survives. The nearby Slains Castle (also known as New Slains Castle) is linked with Bram Stoker and plausibly provided the visual palette for the descriptions of Castle Dracula during the writing phase. A distinctive room in Slains Castle, the octagonal hall, matches the description of the octagonal room in Castle Dracula.[30]

Writings [edit]

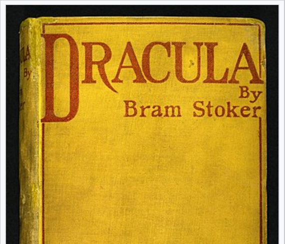


Commemorative plaque in Whitby, North Yorkshire, the English coastal town frequented by Stoker, and where Count Dracula comes ashore in *Dracula*

Stoker visited the English coastal town of Whitby in 1890, and that visit was said to be part of the inspiration for *Dracula*, staying at a guesthouse in West Cliff at 6 Royal Crescent, doing his research at the public library at 7 Pier Road (now *Quayside Fish and Chips*).[31][32][33][34] Count Dracula comes ashore at Whitby, and in the shape of a black dog runs up the 199 steps to the graveyard of St Mary's Church in the shadow of the Whitby Abbey ruins.[35] Stoker began writing novels while working as manager for Irving and secretary and director of London's Lyceum Theatre, beginning with *The Snake's Pass* in 1890 and *Dracula* in 1897. During this period, he was part of the literary staff of *The Daily Telegraph* in London, and he wrote other fiction, including the horror novels *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911).[36] He published his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* in 1906, after Irving's death, which proved successful,[18] and managed productions at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

Before writing *Dracula*, Stoker met Ármin Vámbéry, a Hungarian-Jewish writer and traveller (born in Szent-György, Kingdom of Hungary now Svätý Jur, Slovakia). Dracula likely emerged from Vámbéry's dark stories of the Carpathian Mountains.[37] However this claim has been challenged by many including Elizabeth Miller, a professor who, since 1990, has had as her major field of research and writing *Dracula*, and its author, sources, and influences. She has stated, "The only comment about the subject matter of the talk was that Vambery 'spoke loudly against Russian aggression.'" There had been nothing in their conversations about the "tales of the terrible Dracula" that are supposed to have "inspired Stoker to equate his vampire-protagonist with the long-dead tyrant." At any rate, by this time, Stoker's novel was well under way, and he was already using the name Dracula for his vampire.[38] Stoker then spent several years researching Central and East European folklore and mythological stories of vampires.

The 1972 book *In Search of Dracula* by Radu Florescu and Raymond McNally claimed that the Count in Stoker's novel was based on Vlad III Dracula.[39] However, according to Elizabeth Miller, Stoker borrowed only the name and "scraps of miscellaneous information" about Romanian history; further, there are no comments about Vlad III in the author's working notes.[40][41][42]



The first-edition cover of *Dracula*

Dracula is an epistolary novel, written as a collection of realistic but completely fictional diary entries, telegrams, letters, ship's logs, and newspaper clippings, all of which added a level of detailed realism to the story, a skill which Stoker had developed as a newspaper writer. At the time of its publication, *Dracula* was considered a "straightforward horror novel" based on imaginary creations of supernatural life.[36] "It gave form to a universal fantasy ... and became a part of popular culture."[36] It is one of the most famous works in English literature, and the titular character of Count Dracula has been adapted more times than any other fictional figure.[43] The book also established Stoker's reputation as one of the most acclaimed writers of Gothic horror fiction.[44]

According to the *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, Stoker's stories are today included in the categories of horror fiction, romanticized Gothic stories, and melodrama.[36] They are classified alongside other works of popular fiction, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which also used the myth-making and story-telling method of having multiple narrators telling the same tale from different perspectives. According to historian Jules Zanger, this leads the reader to the assumption that "they can't all be lying".[45]

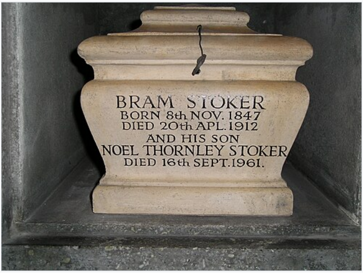
The original 541-page typescript of *Dracula* was believed to have been lost until it was found in a barn in northwestern Pennsylvania in the early 1980s.[46] It consisted of typed sheets with many emendations, and handwritten on the title page was "THE UN-DEAD." The author's name was shown at the bottom as Bram Stoker. Author Robert Latham remarked: "the most famous horror novel ever published, its title changed at the last minute".[47] The typescript was purchased by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen.

Stoker's inspirations for the story, in addition to Whitby, may have included a visit to Slains Castle in Aberdeenshire, a visit to the crypts of St. Michan's Church in Dublin, and the novella *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu.[48] Stoker's original research notes for the novel are kept by the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia. A facsimile edition of the notes was created by Elizabeth Miller and Robert Eighteen-Bisang in 2008.[49]

Stoker at the London Library [edit]

Stoker was a member of the London Library and conducted much of the research for *Dracula* there. In 2018, the Library discovered some of the books that Stoker used for his research, complete with notes and marginalia.[50]

Death [edit]



Shared urn which contains Stoker's and his son's ashes in Golders Green Crematorium, north London

After suffering a number of strokes, Stoker died at No. 26 St George's Square, London on 20 April 1912.[51] Some biographers attribute the cause of death to overwork,[52] others to tertiary syphilis.[53] His death certificate listed the cause of death as "Locomotor ataxia 6 months", presumed to be a reference to syphilis.[54][55] He was cremated, and his ashes are contained in a display urn at Golders Green Crematorium in north London. The ashes of Irving Noel

Stoker, the author's son, were added to his father's urn following his death in 1961. The original plan had been to keep his parents' ashes together, but after Florence Stoker's death on 25 May 1937, her ashes were scattered at the Gardens of Rest, Golders Green.[56]

Beliefs and philosophy [edit]

Stoker was raised a Protestant in the Church of Ireland. He was a strong supporter of the Liberal Party and took a keen interest in Irish affairs.[18] As a "philosophical home ruler", he supported Home Rule for Ireland brought about by peaceful means. He remained an ardent monarchist who believed that Ireland should remain within the British Empire. He was an admirer of Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, whom he knew personally, and supported his plans for Ireland.[57]

Stoker believed in progress and took a keen interest in science and science-based medicine. Some of Stoker's novels represent early examples of science fiction, such as *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909). He had a writer's interest in the occult, notably mesmerism, but despised fraud and believed in the superiority of the scientific method over superstition. Stoker counted among his friends J. W. Brodie-Innis, a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and hired member Pamela Colman Smith as an artist for the Lyceum Theatre, but no evidence suggests that Stoker ever joined the Order himself.[58][59][60]

Like Irving, who was an active Freemason, Stoker also became a member of the order, "initiated into Freemasonry in Buckingham and Chandos Lodge No. 1150 in February 1883, passed in April of that same year, and raised to the degree of Master Mason on 20 June 1883."[61] Stoker however was not a particularly active Freemason, spent only six years as an active member,[61] and did not take part in any Masonic activities during his time in London.[62]

Legacy [edit]

His novel *Dracula* has become one of the most influential and well-known works of both vampire fiction and English literature.[63] Count Dracula is also ranked among the most depicted fictional characters of the Victorian era,[7] with over 700 adaptations.[9] The significance of the novel and its direct impact on subsequent vampire-themed works led to Stoker being popularly regarded as "the father of vampire fiction."[11][12] The short story collection *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* was published in 1914 by Stoker's widow, Florence Stoker, who was also his literary executrix.

In popular culture [edit]

A monument to Stoker has been erected at the Borgo Pass, 45 kilometres from Bistritz (Romania) at an altitude of 1,200 metres.[64]

On 8 November 2012, Stoker was honoured with a Google Doodle on Google's homepage commemorating the 165th anniversary of his birth.[65][66]

An annual festival takes place in Dublin, the birthplace of Bram Stoker, in honour of his literary achievements. The Dublin City Council Bram Stoker Festival encompasses spectacles, literary events, film, family-friendly activities and outdoor events, and takes place every October Bank Holiday Weekend in Dublin.[67][68] The festival is supported by the Bram Stoker Estate[69] and is funded by Dublin City Council. Dacre Stoker, Stoker's great grand-nephew, his wife Jennes Stroker and Stoker's great-grandson Robin Guy MacCaw, are the co-owners of Bram Stoker LLC, which represents the descents of Bram Stoker in the UK and controls the international rights and trademarks of the Bram Stoker Estate.[70][71][72][73]

The first film adaptation of *Dracula* was F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, released in 1922, with Max Schreck starring as Count Orlok. Florence Stoker eventually sued the filmmakers and was represented by the attorneys of the British Incorporated Society of Authors. Her chief legal complaint was that she had neither been asked for permission for the adaptation nor paid any royalty. The case dragged on for some years, with Mrs. Stoker demanding the destruction of the negative and all prints of the film. The suit was finally resolved in the widow's favour in July 1925. A single print of the film survived, however, and it has become well known. The first authorised film version of *Dracula* did not come about until almost a decade later when Universal Studios released Tod Browning's *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi.[*citation needed*]

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Novels [edit]

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- *The Chain of Destiny* (novella) (1875)
- *The Snake's Pass* (1890)
- *The Watter's Mou'* (novella) (1895)
- *The Shoulder of Shasta* (1895)
- *Dracula* (1897)
- *Miss Betty* (1898)
- *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902)
- *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903, revised 1912)
- *The Man* (1905); issued also as *The Gates of Life*
- *Lady Athlyne* (1908)
- *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909)
- *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911, posthumously abridged 1925); issued also as *The Garden of Evil*

Short story collections [edit]

- *Under the Sunset* (1881) – eight fairy tales for children
- *Snowbound: The Record of a Theatrical Touring Party* (1908)
- *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914)

Uncollected stories [edit]

Title	Date of earliest appearance	Earliest appearance	Notes
"The Crystal Cup"	September 1872	*London Society* (London)	
"Buried Treasures"	13 March 1875 and 20 March 1875	*The Shamrock* (Dublin)	
"The Chain of Destiny"	1 May 1875 and 22 May 1875	*The Shamrock* (Dublin)	
"Our New House"	23 November 1885	*The Theatre Annual* (London)	
"The Dualitists; or, The Death Doom of the Double Born"	November 1886	*The Theatre Annual* (London)	
"The Gombeen Man"	1890	*The People* (London)	Chapter 3 of *The Snake's Pass*
"Gibbet Hill"[74]	17 December 1890	*Daily Express* (Dublin)	
"The Night of the Shifting Bog"	January 1891	*Current Literature: A Magazine of Record and Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1. (New York)	Chapter 17 of *The Snake's Pass*

"Lord Castleton Explains"	30 January 1892	*The Gentlewoman: The Illustrated Weekly Journal for Gentlewomen* (London)	Chapter 10 of *The Fate of Fenella* (Hutchinson, 1892)
"Old Hoggen: A Mystery"	15 January 1893	*Boston Herald*	
"The Man from Shorrox"	February 1894	*The Pall Mall Magazine* (London)	
"When the Sky Rains Gold"	26 August and 2 September 1894	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (London)	
"The Red Stockade"	September 1894	*The Cosmopolitan: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine* (London)	
"At the Watter's Mou': Between Duty and Love"	November 1895	*Current Literature: A Magazine of Record and Review*, Vol. XVIII, No. 5. (New York)	Part of Chapter 2 of *The Watter's Mou'*
"Bengal Roses"	17 and 24 July 1898	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*	
"A Baby Passenger"	9 February 1899	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*	Alternate version of "Chin Music", from *Snowbound*
"A Young Widow"	26 March 1899	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*	

"A Yellow Duster"	7 May 1899	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*	
"Lucky Escapes of Sir Henry Irving"	1 May 1900	*The St. Paul Globe*	
"The Seer"	1902	*The Mystery of the Sea* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.)	Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Mystery of the Sea*
"The Bridal of Death"	1903	*The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (London: William Heinemann)	Alternate ending to *The Jewel of Seven Stars*
"A Widower's Grief"	October 1906	*Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: William Heinemann)	Part of Chapter 39 of *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*
"To the Rescue"	22 April 1908	*The Westminster Gazette*	
"The 'Eroes of the Thames"	October 1908	*The Royal Magazine* (London)	
"What They Confessed: A Low Comedian's Story"	27 December 1908	*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*	Alternate version of "In Fear of Death", from *Snowbound*
"The Way of Peace"	December 1909	*Everybody's Story Magazine* (London)	

"Greater Love"	October 1914	*The London Magazine* (London)	

Non-fiction [edit]

- *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* (1879)
- *A Glimpse of America* (1886)
- *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906)
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Short story collections	*Under the Sunset* (1881) · *Snowbound: The Record of a Theatrical Touring Party* (1908) · *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914)
Short stories	"Gibbet Hill" (1890) · "The Judge's House" (1891) · "The Squaw" (1893) · "The Burial of the Rats" (1896) · "Dracula's Guest" (1914)
Non-fiction	*Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906) · *Famous Impostors* (1910)
Related	Charlotte Stoker (mother) · Florence Stoker (wife) · Thornley Stoker (brother) · William Thomson (brother-in-law) · Bram Stoker Award · *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* (1971) · *The Lair of the White Worm* (1988) · *Bram Stoker's Burial of the Rats* (1995) · *Shadow Builder* (1998) · *Bram Stoker's Legend of the Mummy* (1998)

V · T · E **Bram Stoker's *Dracula*** [show]

V · T · E **Film adaptations of Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*** [show]

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